

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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INR-07 NSAE-00 EUR-12 ARA-06 DHA-02 IGA-02 OMB-01
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FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1809

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PDIP, SHUM, CM, CG
SUBJ: GLEANINGS FROM FAREWELLS

REF: YAOUNDE 1893

1. SUMMARY. DURING MY FAREWELL CALLS ON MINISTERS AND AT RESIDENCE DINNER PARTY, TWO MESSAGES COME THROUGH WITH SUCH CLARITY THAT THEIR DELIVERY MUST BE CONCERTED BY GOVERNMENT OF UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON (GURC): STRONG FEELINGS OF GOODWILL FOR US AND CONCERN OVER COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA. END SUMMARY.

2. WE GAVE BUFFET-DINNER DANCE AT RESIDENCE NIGHT OF APRIL 29 WHICH HAD ATTENDANCE TOTALLY UNPRECEDENTED FOR ANY DIPLOMATIC OCCASION EXCEPT OUR BICENTENNIAL VIN D'HONNEUR WITH PRESIDENT AHIDJO, HIS WHOLE GOVERNMENT, AND GOVERNOR SCRANTON. PRESENT WERE MINISTER FOREIGN AFFAIRS KEUTCHA, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOUSING AND EQUIPMENT KWAYEB, MINISTER OF TRANSPORT MONIE, MINISTER OF HUSBANDRY MAIKANO, VICE MINISTERS OF TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION, EDUCATION, AGRICULTURE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY IN PRESIDENCY BOUBA BELLO, AND GOVERNOR OF SOUTH-CENTRAL PROVINCE, PLUS SEVERAL SECRETARIES GENERAL AND OTHER HIGH FUNCTIONARIES. AMBASSADORS OF FRANCE, ITALY, SOUTH KOREA, CANADA, AND SWISS

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AND ALGERIAN CHARGES, WHO ALSO INVITED, WERE AMAZED BY CAMEROONIAN PRESENCE, SINCE NONE CAN EVER GET ONE OR AT MOST TWO MINISTERS FOR THEIR OCCASIONS.

3. FYI: IN FALL OF 1975, PROTOCOL ISSUED ORDER THAT ONLY ONE MINISTER COULD ATTEND NATIONAL DAY FUNCTIONS, IN ORDER TO AVOID AMBASSADORS COUNTING MINISTERS AND REPORTING HOME THAT

GURC DISCRIMINATES. THIS RULE HAS BEEN GENERALLY OBSERVED AT BOTH NATIONAL DAYS AND DEFINITIVE DEPARTURES OF AMBASSADORS. THEY ARE OBVIOUSLY MAKING DELIBERATE EXCEPTION, WHICH THEY ARE WILLING OR EAGER TO LET OTHER EMBASSIES PERCEIVE AS WELL. END FYI.

4. ALMOST EVERYONE OF THE HALF DOZEN MINISTERS ON WHOM I HAVE PAID CALLS SO FAR HAS TALKED OF IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH US, BETTER AMERICAN APPRECIATION OF CAMEROON'S ROLE, APPRECIATION FOR INCREASED AND MORE RESPONSIVE US AID, AND CONCERN ABOUT COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES ON CONTINENT. THIS WAS TRUE EVEN OF MINISTER OF TRANSPORT, WITH WHOM I HAD EXPECTED TO CONCENTRATE ON AID TO TRANSCAM III. MONIE, WHO WAS PROFESSOR OF LAW AT UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE UNTIL 1975, GAVE PRETEXT OF HIS CURRENT INABILITY TO KEEP UP WITH FORMER ACADEMIC INTERESTS TO ASK FOR MY OPINION OF SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES FROM HORN TO ANGOLA. I BELIEVE HE USED ACADEMIC PLOY TO PROTECT HIMSELF AGAINST CHARGES OF MEDDLING IN THEIR PORTFOLIOS FROM FOREIGN AND SECURITY AFFAIRS MINISTERS. I USED OCCASION TO EXPLAIN US HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY IN CONNECTION WITH FMS FINANCING REQUEST FOR CAMEROON, OF WHICH HE MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY AWARE, SINCE GURC HIGHLY COMPARTMENTALIZED. I SUGGESTED THAT HE, AS ANGLOPHONE LAWYER, MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN IMPORTANCE OF US HUMAN RIGHTS POSITIONS, INCLUDING INSISTENCE ON DUE PROCESS OF LAW, TO HIS LAY AND/OR FRANCOPHONE COLLEAGUES. HE SAID HE WOULD TRY. LIKE HIS COLLEAGUES, HE DOES NOT REPEAT NOT APPLY HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERN SELECTIVELY TO SOUTHERN AFRICA ONLY.

5. FYI: WE HAVE HEARD INDIRECT QUERIES FROM CAMEROONIANS WHO
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CANNOT UNDERSTAND FREEDOM HOUSE CLASSIFICATION OF THEIR COUNTRY, IN CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENT, AS "NOT FREE," ALONG WITH OBVIOUSLY UNFREE COUNTRIES LIKE EQUATORIAL GUINEA AND UGANDA. WE HAVE TOLD THEM THAT FREEDOM HOUSE HAS SOMEWHAT UNDIFFERENTIATED THREE CATEGORY CLASSIFICATION, THAT IT IS A PRIVATE ORGANIZATION AND THAT CONTRARY TO THEIR FEARS IT DOES NOT MEAN US GOVERNMENT VIEWS CAMEROON AS OUTSIDE "FREE WORLD". END FYI.

6. PRIME MINISTER BIYA EMPHASIZED GENUINNESS OF CAMEROON'S NON-ALIGNMENT BY CONTRAST WITH THAT OF SOME OTHER SO-CALLED NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES. HE SPOKE OF CAMEROON'S NATURAL ECONOMIC AFFINITIES WITH NON-SOCIALIST ECONOMIES AND CAMEROONIANS' REJECTION OF SOCIALIST IDEOLOGIES. HE RECALLED VISIT BY OPIC TEAM IN MARCH 1976 AND INQUIRED WHETHER ANY INVESTMENTS WERE DEVELOPING OUT OF THE FOLLOW-UP. HE ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR TRANSCAM III AND POSSIBLE FMS AID AND, LOOKING AT MAP OF COUNTRY, EXPLAINED HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN ABOUT ALL NEIGHBORS.

7. EVENTS IN ZAIRE WERE NOT REPEAT NOT MENTIONED BY ANY MINISTER, INCLUDING FOREIGN MINISTER DURING LAST NIGHT'S DINNER. WHEN I RAISED MATTER IN PASSING, HE SAID THEIR INFORMATION WAS LIMITED TO WHAT COMES OVER RADIO AND EXPRESSED NO FURTHER INTEREST. SINCE ALL SUCH THINGS, FROM CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS TO ATTENDANCE AT SOCIAL EVENTS, TEND TO BE CENTRALLY COORDINATED BY PRESIDENCY, GURC GIVES IMPRESSION OF WANTING TO MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE ON ISSUE OF ZAIRE EVEN AFTER IMPROVEMENT IN MOBUTU'S FURTUNES.

8. COMMENT: BUILD-UP OF MANIFESTATIONS OF GOODWILL FOR THE UNITED STATES, COMBINED WITH REPEATED EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN OVER COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA, CREATES SOME SUSPENSE ABOUT WHAT I WILL BE TOLD, GIVEN, AND/OR ASKED FOR WHEN PRESIDENT AHIDJO RECEIVES ME FOR FAREWELL MAY 6 (REFTEL).

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